

Bitterroot AUDUBON



DECEMBER 2018

NEWSLETTER

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HAMILTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15TH

By John Ormiston, compiler 360-9530

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, and that means Saturday, December 15th, Bitterroot Audubon Society and friends will count all the birds in the 176 square mile Hamilton Christmas Bird Count circle for the 32nd time. We need to uphold tradition by meeting at The Teller Education Building (south of Quast Lane on Chaffin) at 7:30 AM, eating chili and Oreos at noon (thanks for the 32nd time to Bill Good), and having a grand time with fellow birders. Just like always the total count will be heavily dependent on favorable weather, but we'll count no matter what the conditions. We'll organize into 6 or more groups, each with an experienced leader, and get out into the field shortly after daylight. Participants will have choices of area and routes to count, some involve walking, others mostly driving and looking. At noon we'll reorganize and try to cover any place missed in the morning.

We annually see about 7,500 birds and about 67 species. In 2006 we saw about 6,900 birds of 74 species and led the State. Our cumulative species list contains 131 species with 28 species seen every year and 21 only once. The Hamilton Count annually finishes in the top 5 in the state, most often in the top three, competing with Big Fork, Missoula and Stevensville. We need the help of birders of all skill levels to help find and identify all the birds in the 7 ½ mile circle centered on the Hamilton Airport.

Feeder watchers provide essential help. Every year folks who can't go to the field add several species to our list. You can help by counting the birds at your feeder for the entire day, or for a few hours or minutes when you can take the time during the day. You all know someone who feeds birds; encourage

them to report their findings to Colleen Powell, the feeder watcher coordinator for the 32nd time, by calling her at 363-2116. We've only had about 20 feeder watchers each year; surely more folks than that feed birds and can identify their beneficiaries.

Please call Colleen at 363-2116 or me at 360-9530 if you know someone who could count birds at their feeder, or if you need more information about the 32nd annual Hamilton Christmas Bird Count.

Comes a time for older folks to step aside and create new enthusiasm and energy to keep things going. After 32 years of coordinating the Hamilton CBC it's time for new energy. I'll not compile the 33rd Hamilton CBC so if you're interested in taking over let me know and I can tell you all you need to know in about half an hour. Colleen has done a great job for all these years but if someone would like to coordinate feeder watchers she would welcome the chance to retire also. Someone, or more, please step up to coordinate and compile the CBC next year.



Courtesy Nathan DeBoer

Snow Gees in the Bitterroot Valley.

STEVENSVILLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29TH

By Dave Lockman

The 54th annual Stevensville Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Saturday, December 29th. We hope you'll be able to join us for a fun day (or morning) of meeting new folks and finding birds in our local winter wonderland. It's a big area and we need all the help we can get. Experience is helpful, but certainly not required. Field observers will meet in the basement conference room of the Stevensville Ranger Station between 7:30 and 7:45 AM to form small teams and get area assignments. Birders who live in the Count Circle (anywhere within 7.5 miles of the Ranger Station) can opt to get up at their leisure and count the birds on their property. Both types of counters are critical to a successful count. You don't have to spend all day counting birds, any time you have is helpful.

Bird counters on last year's Stevensville CBC found 13,017 birds of 82 different species. We didn't find any new species, so our total cumulative species count remains at 158. There are always some interesting birds out there just waiting to be discovered, so come and help us find all the common and unusual birds hiding in our winter landscape. I will unfortunately be out of town on Count Day, so Deborah Goslin has once again agreed to lead the charge. Please contact her at 214-7879 or dagoslin3@gmail.com for more information.



Northern Harrier.

Courtesy Nathan DeBoer

BIG HOLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SATURDAY, JANUARY 5TH

By Kate Stone

Ready for some cold? Join members of Bitterroot Audubon on Saturday, January 5th for the 11th

annual Big Hole Christmas Bird Count. We will have options for both hiking and driving surveys. You will be sure to see several interesting species; commonly seen species include Snow Buntings, Common Redpolls, and Rough-legged Hawks. Participants usually spend about 4 hours in the field searching for birds, followed by lunch in Wisdom. If you'd like to participate, please contact Kate Stone (381-1115; kroestone@hotmail.com) to register and for information about the meeting place and time.

Letter from the President

By Becky Peters, BAS President

Gifts to Give to Nature

It's that time of warm tea, long nights and visiting family and friends - and gift giving! What is on your list to give this year? I hope you will consider gifts that could help our natural world in its time of need. I have included some ideas here, as I did last year, so I hope there are some new ones. Our governments have been given a "wake-up call in the form of a report finding that business as usual will push us over the edge of this climate change crisis in less than two decades" so I am more and more adamant about us being empowered and committed to our tasks.

Here are some ideas to consider giving to loved ones or donating to organizations in honor of loved ones:

- ♥ Naomi Klein's book about capitalism and climate change - *This Changes Everything*
- ♥ Michael Bloomberg and Carl Pope
<https://www.climateofhope.com/> *Climate of Hope*

(I don't know anything about this book, it just looked optimistic!)

- ♥ Paul Hawken's *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*. Here's an interesting article about the book: <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2017/5/10/15589038/top-100-solutions-climate-change-ranked>
- ♥ World Wildlife Fund <https://www.wwf.org>
- ♥ Ranger Rick
<https://www.nwf.org/ReversingWildlifeCrisis>
- ♥ <https://www.treehugger.com/slideshows/gift-guides/10-gifts-also-give-wildlife/>
(and yes, I sacrifice and do my part on the



chocolate one!)

- ♥ Nature Conservancy: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/membership-and-giving/donate-to-our-mission/other-ways-to-give/>
- ♥ Need a place to help you donate? I know this is a repeat but go to Charity Navigator. If you have never used it here's a quick run through: <https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=search.results&overallrtg=4>

Bill and I always start at the 4 star charities. So in this example you would filter 4 Stars, Montana, then Environment, then Local. You would then get three charities that fit those criteria. From there you can check on each one's financial and transparency profile, the programs they spend their money on, how much money is spent on administration and how they compare to other charities like them. It's a very wise way to honor a loved one and help the charity of your (or their) choice. Go ahead and check out different filters, different charities! I hope you have a peaceful and nature-loving Holiday time!

Becky

Calendar of Events

- Dec 15:** Hamilton Christmas Bird Count, The Teller Education Building, 7:30AM
- Dec 29:** Stevensville Christmas Bird Count, Stevensville Ranger Station, 7:30AM
- Jan 5:** Big Hole Christmas Bird Count, contact Kate Stone (381-1115; kroestone@hotmail.com) to register
- Jan 21:** Audubon Meeting, location TBA, 7PM, Board Mtg. 5PM.

Audubon Adventures News

By Betsy Ballard

Greetings, Bitterroot Audubon Members. We are asking for support for the Audubon Adventures Classroom program. Audubon Adventures is an environmental education curriculum product created by the National Audubon Society for grades 3 - 5. Developed by professional environmental educators, Audubon Adventures presents standards-based science content about birds, wildlife, and their habitats. We are contacting the teachers from last year to see what kits they would like and also outreaching for additional teachers or home school parents who

might be interested in participating. If you wish to participate this year, we and the teachers greatly appreciate your support.

Below is a link to Audubon adventures if you wish to see what curriculums are available.

<http://www.audubonadventures.org/>

The Classroom kits are \$45.95, which includes shipping.

If you would like to sponsor a kit, you can mail your donation to: Bitterroot Audubon, P.O. Box 326, Hamilton, MT 59840, or bring it to a monthly meeting.

If you have questions, please call or text Betsy Ballard (cell phone -239-5105) or email at: diamondback@cybernet1.com

Membership Survey

By Becky Peters

Members have hopefully received a Survey Monkey questionnaire from Bitterroot Audubon in their email. If you have not, please check your spam folder. Let us know if you need us to resend the survey. The Survey Monkey contains 10 questions and should be easy to take. Your Bitterroot Audubon Board would like BAS to remain relevant and beneficial to our community. We appreciate your input. Email Becky Peters if you have any questions: rpeters@montana.com

Get your 2019 Bitterroot Audubon Calendar!

By Becky Peters



Have you purchased your copy of that exquisite 2019 BAS Calendar Yet? You can purchase a calendar for only \$15 and all proceeds stay here in the valley for our Education, Conservation and Scholarship Funds! This is truly a one of a kind calendar! You won't get one in the mail like this because no one makes them like this, not even National Audubon! We give you a place to track the birds you see each month, information about where to find which birds each month plus simply stunning

photos of birds taken here in the Bitterroot by photographers from the Bitterroot. There is an added bonus of adorable drawings of birds done by Victor 4th and 5th graders. Everything is locally made by your non-profit Bitterroot Audubon! You can purchase the calendars from our website for \$20, or for \$15 at the Stevensville or Corvallis Holiday Craft Shows, or at these fine stores that support us: In Hamilton – Bitterroot Drug, Art Focus, Robbin’s Hallmark, Hamilton Gifts, and Artisans on 2nd. In Corvallis – Corvallis Merc. In Victor – Noah’s Ark. In Stevensville – Valley Drug and Variety, and Ace Hardware. In Florence – Ace Hardware. This is our only fund raiser. Thank you so much for supporting us and what we do to help the birds and their habitat here in the valley.

What’s the story, Story?

By Jim Story

Question: What are feathers exactly?

Answer: Feathers are the lightweight structures covering birds that enable bird flight. No other animal has feathers, and all birds have them. Feather numbers per individual vary from 1,000 on hummingbirds to 25,000 on swans. There are several types of feathers on a bird. The “contour feathers” are those containing the bare shaft or “quill.” The other part of the shaft contains the flat, flexible “vane”, comprised of numerous parallel barbs running diagonally outward from the shaft. The barbs contain “barbules” running diagonally from their shafts. Each barbule contains tiny hooklets that connect to adjoining barbules creating a feather that zips together into a functional unit. If the connecting barbs become separated, the bird can zip the feather back together by preening the separated feathers. Down feathers lack barbules, occur under the contour feathers and serve primarily as insulation. Some birds have “powder down” (pigeons, hawks, herons and parrots) which disintegrates into powder and may help in waterproofing. Facial bristles are common on swallows, flycatchers, Common Poorwills and others.

Local birding expert Jim Story answers your questions about birds and their habits. Jim welcomes your questions at jstory4689@gmail.com.

Silent Fall

By Judy Hoy

A new book, Silent Fall by long time Bald Eagle researcher, Terrence N. Ingram was recently

published. It costs \$10 and he hopes to sell lots of books to raise money for more Bald Eagle monitoring. In the book he documents the recent significant decline in immature Bald Eagles in the area where he and his colleagues have counted Bald Eagles since 1961. The last four years there have been only 2 to 3 hundred immature eagles observed, down in number by half or more from the number usually seen in recent years. Terry also discusses the decline in honeybee colonies as a long time beekeeper and the declines in common songbirds in his area and makes suggestions for mitigating the declines in wildlife. Let me know at [<bjhoy@localnet.com>](mailto:bjhoy@localnet.com) if you would like to buy a copy of Silent Fall. I can order the books from Terry at Eagle Nature Foundation, Ltd. to save on postage and bring them to the Audubon meetings for you to get from me. Or you can order your book directly from Eagle Nature Foundation, Ltd.

News and Notes

Call for Photos

Bitterroot Audubon is seeking images of birds for a feature in our newsletter: *Bird Shots*. If you have taken a great photo and would like to submit it for consideration, please email the jpeg image, with a brief description, to BASeditors@gmail.com.

Bitterroot Audubon is on Facebook and Instagram

If you use Facebook or Instagram, please look for Bitterroot Audubon and “Like” us!

Bird Shots



Northern Harrier.

Courtesy Nathan DeBoer

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WEBSITE: www.BitterrootAudubon.org

INSTAGRAM: @bitterroot_audubon

Chapter Only Membership

The Bitterroot Audubon Chapter Only Membership is \$15/year. These members will be supporting local chapter activities, receive the full color e-newsletter, and enjoy Chapter benefits. To join as a Chapter Only Member, complete this form.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____

Send this application with \$15 to:



Bitterroot Audubon Society
PO Box 326
Hamilton, MT 59840-0326

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Audubon

Renew or Sign up
for your
National Audubon Membership at
Audubon.org